

July 20, 2020

Dear Members of the Idaho State Bar:

The Idaho Supreme Court has the obligation to oversee the practice of law in our state. We take this obligation seriously. While we recognize that COVID-19 has placed applicants in a difficult position, we will not compromise the standards we have set for admission to the bar. As the professional licensure exam for lawyers, the bar exam helps ensure the professional integrity and competence of the legal profession, creating a standard that informs and protects both the attorneys operating in our state and the clients who retain their services.

For those who elect to take it, the Idaho State Bar, in recognition of state and local health guidelines, will be implementing additional procedures to provide a testing environment which is fair and as safe as possible under the circumstances. Those measures include:

- Thermal screening prior to entering the testing site;
- Mandatory masks at all times;
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols throughout the shared spaces;
- Exam takers seated in large rooms with 20 or fewer people, spaced six feet or more apart; and
- All examination supplies have been pre-packaged well in advance to further safeguard from touch transfer of the virus.

These steps are in addition to existing rules for taking, handling and grading the Bar Examination pursuant to IBCR 217.

For those who decide not to take the exam in July 2020, this Court has taken additional steps to ameliorate the impact of COVID-19 by:

- waiving all fees associated with deferring taking the bar exam which would ordinarily apply under Rule 219 of the Idaho Bar Commission Rules; and,
- by emergency order of the Idaho Supreme Court, dated July 20, 2020, we have extended the term of a limited license to practice law pursuant to Idaho Bar Commission Rule 226 until October 31, 2021, for any 2020 graduate of an ABA accredited law school who has already registered for the exam and elects to defer taking the bar exam. Rule 226 of the Idaho Bar Commission Rules enables recent graduates to obtain a limited license to practice law under the supervision of a licensed attorney. The decision to extend that limited license until October 31, 2021, would enable applicants to defer taking the exam and allow them to work with a limited license until the fall of 2021. This will allow the applicant to sit for one of two exams in 2021.

The Idaho Supreme Court appreciates and respects the advocacy of law students and others who have reached out to us about the upcoming Idaho Bar Examination. We have heard from those